

An education in volunteerism

Students gearing up to go back to school are ready to tackle core subjects like math and science.

But what about volunteerism?

Volunteering adds another dimension to a teenager's life by providing them with the opportunity to make a difference, learn about community needs and issues, take on responsibility and gain self-confidence.

Teens who volunteer also benefit by building their resume with relevant work experience that could count toward scholarships and awards.

"Volunteering is a great way for youth to express their enthusiasm, passion or interest for all things," explains Janice Bell, director of Volunteer Edmonton.

"It's important to remember that there are a variety of volunteer opportunities for youth - not just stuffing envelopes or answering phones."

Designing logos, caring for sick and injured animals, teaching art classes to young children, organizing neighbourhood clean-up crews and developing websites are just a few examples of the kinds of opportunities available to youth.

Statistics Canada shows that participation in volunteering during the formative years of childhood may encourage young people to take on more community involvement activities later in life.

Parents encouraging their teens to volunteer should also think about becoming a volunteer themselves, as well, since many organizations welcome families who wish to volunteer in groups.

It's also a chance to set a positive example, while making the most out of the time spent as a family.

There are many areas to explore - from healthcare to environment to social services, sports and the arts.



While some organizations are unable to accept volunteers under the age of 18 due to the nature of the work, a little bit of research into the organizations that do offer youth-friendly volunteer positions should yield valuable results.

Visit Volunteer Edmonton's website - www.volunteeredmonton.com - to gain access to a number of different websites that list opportunities.

One example is govolunteer.ca, which is a comprehensive online database where

visitors can search for volunteer opportunities by location, type and organization.

There's even a youth-specific organization - Alberta's YOUTHVolunteer! - that connects youth ages 14 to 24 to volunteer opportunities across the province.

The organization features a list of up-to-date, youth-friendly volunteer positions on its website, along with current events happening around the province that are of interest to this demographic.

If you don't have access to the Internet, another quick and easy option is dialing 311. This is a free, 24-hour phone number that can be called within Edmonton.

Operators can provide callers with appropriate referrals to organizations that feature youth volunteer opportunities.

"Youth gain new skills and experiences, while non-profit/voluntary organizations and their clients are benefiting from volunteer contributions that will help them deliver much-needed programs and services. "It's a win-win situation," says Bell.

Visit www.volunteeredmonton.com to find out how you can get involved.

For more information or to suggest a story idea, please contact Evelyn Pham at 780-732-6655.

EDMONTON



Apply Now for Vacancies on Agencies, Boards and Commissions

Building Edmonton Board by Board

Advisory Boards	Vacancies	Offer Your Voice:
Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities	6	on current and future service needs of Edmontonians with disabilities
Community Services Advisory Board	1	on arts, culture, sports, recreation, parks, etc. and help allocate some City grants
Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee	5	to promote the awareness and development of Aboriginal people in the City of Edmonton
Edmonton Historical Board	1	for preserving and safeguarding historical properties, resources, communities and documentary heritage
LTAB (Landlord and Tenant Advisory) Board	3	on residential tenancy issues and the services provided by the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board
Decision-Making Boards	Use your Decision-Making Abilities to:	
Combative Sports Commission	1	govern and regulate combative sports (including boxing, wrestling and martial arts) with a primary focus on administration, safety and adherence to rules and regulations
Edmonton Public Library Board	3	provide direction for this vital service through traditional methods and new technology
Greater Edmonton Foundation, Housing for Seniors	2	govern the development and management of seniors' lodges, apartment buildings and duplexes
Non-Profit Housing Corporation	2	direct the development and operation of municipally owned non-profit housing
Subdivision and Development Appeal Board	4	conduct hearings to deal with disputes under the Zoning and Subdivision Authority Bylaws

City Council values the broad range of talents, abilities, and perspectives found amongst the citizens of Edmonton. Applicants from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply, and preference is given to residents of the City.

For application packages and more information visit www.edmonton.ca/recruitment or call the Office of the City Clerk at 780-442-4395.

Application Deadline is 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, September 30, 2009.



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